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Bigfoot in the Adirondacks

by Bruce G. Hallenbeck, Bob Bartholomew and Paul Bartholomew

"...Big red eyes that bulged about half an inch off its face...it has no ears and it has no tail...and it doesn't walk on all fours, it walks on two like a man would ...dark brown hair, almost black...the arms swung down past his knees..."

Descriptions of hairy, bipedal, apelike creatures are common in the vast Pacific Northwest, where such beings are referred to as "Sasquatch" or "Bigfoot." Contrary to popular belief, however, such animals—if they are, indeed, animals and not some form of primitive sub-human—have been reported all over the United States and, in fact, all over the world. The above description did not emanate from California or Oregon or Washington State. It was an eyewitness description of a being sighted in the Adirondacks, near Whitehall, New York.

People seem willing to at least accept the possibility of such antediluvian creatures surviving in remote places such as the Himalayas, where apelike beings wander the snowy wastes, according to native lore, and are called the "yeti" or "abominable snowman." But when people hear stories of such outre beings reported in such diverse areas of the world as Australia ("yowies"), the Soviet Union ("Alma") and China ("wildmen"), they begin to find their credulity being stretched.

Nevertheless, a vast body of evidence exists to suggest that such creatures have been seen on every continent except Antarctica since time immemorial. Legends abound the world over of giant wild men of the woods, and modern-day sightings reported by sober citizens would seem to suggest that those legends have a basis in fact.

In the United States, "Bigfoot" reports have come in from every state in the union with the exception of Hawaii. In recent years the reports have centered no so much in the Pacific Northwest as in Florida, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New Jersey and New York State.

One of the very earliest Bigfoot accounts we have came from Sackett's Harbor, New York, in 1818. The following is an account from the *Exeter Watchman* of 22 September 1818:

Sackett's Harbor (N.Y.) Sept. 6

ANOTHER WONDER

Report says, that in the vicinity of Ellisburgh, was seen on the 30th Ult. by a gentleman of unquestionable veracity, an animal resembling the Wild Man of the Woods. It is stated

that he came from the woods within a few rods of this gentleman—that he stood and looked at him and then took his flight in a direction which gave a perfect view of him for some time. He is described as bending forward when running—hairy, and the heel of his foot narrow, spreading at the toes. Hundreds of persons have been in pursuit for several days, but nothing further is seen or heard of him.

The frequent and positive manner in which this story comes, induces us to believe it. We wish not to impeach the veracity of this man...

The amazing similarity of the 1818 report to modern-day sightings can only bring one to the conclusion that it's the same type of creature we would now call, for want of a better term, Bigfoot. Indeed, there is a story from the thirties that indicates the origin of that term may have been in the Adirondacks.

A Bigfoot Yarn

The first creature to have been called "Bigfoot" may have, in fact, been an ordinary man, a person who had gone back to nature deep in the Adirondacks to live off the land. The "creature", as he was called, had been sighted several times and was often described as being an enormous, hairy "wild man" with a footprint "nearly a yard across."

It had been a long-forgotten tale until a rash of Bigfoot reports from Whitehall in 1976 brought retired Sergeant Walter E. Dixon, stationed for years with Troop B of the New York State Police, to relate the yarn of the Adirondack "wild man."

It seems that the wild man had been blamed for burning down several lumber camps and cabins in the Hamilton County area. State Police finally made an effort to capture the man on a cold night in February, 1932.

Two cousins by the names of Dick Farrell and Reg Springs of Indian Lake were trapping roughly two miles south of Blue Mountain Lake. The two trappers had found an abandoned cabin near O'Neil Flow and were headed up to the loft for some sleep when they saw what they thought was a huge creature looking in the window. It seemed to be covered from head to foot with hair and, as it ran away, it left deep footprints in the snow.

The two cousins, understandably frightened, travelled to Indian Lake and contacted Farrell's brother, a Conservation Officer named Jack Farrell. The officer organized a search party that went into the O'Neil Flow area after the "wild man."

The posse was under the charge of Lt. Charles B. McCann of Troop B State Police. The party included Ernest Blanchard of Indian Lake, Trooper Addison Hall, and Charles Turner of Indian Lake, along with the Farrel Brothers and Springs.

When they reached the cabin, they tracked the footprints of the "creature" in the snow. The men claimed that the tracks were 30 inches long (a Big Foot, indeed!), very wide and easy to follow in the snow.

On the second day of their search, they supposedly found a cabin in an old lumber camp near Dunbrook Mountain in the chain lakes area of the Town of Newcomb. The men quickly surrounded the camp.

They called out to the "creature" to come out of camp and give himself (or itself) up. Apparently, though, it jumped through a window and ran off through the snow. It crouched by a pile of logs and reportedly said: "I just want to be left alone. Go away."

As the posse advanced closer, the "creature" (which by now everyone realized was a man) fired a shotgun and Turner was hit, falling to the snow. Lt. McCann ordered the men to fire, and a barrage shot the man down.

Cautiously, the group moved forward and realized that they had killed the famed "wild man." They uncovered several layers of untanned deer and bearskins from his body and found that he was, in fact, a five-foot, six inch, 160 pound black man.

Turner had been struck in the hip by the slug from the wild man's shotgun, but the injury wasn't as serious as was first surmised.

The men retured to town where they brought in Hamilton County Coroner Dr. H.F. Carroll, who walked more than ten miles on snowshoes to reach the body, which was subsequently brought to Burt Swain's Funeral Parlor in North Creek on a toboggan.

No one ever discovered the identity of the wild man. In addition to the burned and probably stolen shotgun in his possession, he was carrying four dollars in Canadian money. Hamilton County wouldn't put up the $75 needed to bury him, with county officials claiming that he had been shot in Essex County. The story goes that he was buried in Potters Field in a corner of a cemetery in North Creek in an unmarked grave.

"There is lately arrived in France from America, a wild man, who was caught in the woods, 200 miles back from the Lake of the Woods, by a party of Indians; they had seen him several times, but he was so swift of foot that they could by no means get up with him. He is near seven feet high, covered with hair, but has little appearance of understanding and is remarkably sullen and untractable. When he was taken, half a bear was found lying by him, which he had just killed." From *The Daily Universal Register (London Times) Tuesday, January 4th., 1785.*

But how had he made such large footprints? Police discovered that he had wrapped his feet in layers of bearskins making a huge snowshoe that enable him to run over the snow, causing him to leave a huge "foot-print". The name "Big Foot" was coined to describe the tracks of the unfortunate wild man.

It's a colorful story, and those involved all swore every word of it was true. But whether or not the origin of the term "Bigfoot" can be traced to the Adirondack region, there is no doubt that a tradition of such creatures—not men, but something quite different—has existed here since before the White Man's arrival.

An incident from historical record, found in a booklet entitled THE HERMIT OF SISKYOU. *A hunter named Jack Dover confronts a Bigfoot in the Marble Mountains of Northern California, around 1846.*

Indian Legends

Virtually every Indian tribe in North America had legends concerning wild men. The Stone Giants of the Iroquois were supposedly unacquainted with bow and arrow, and instead employed rocks for weapons. They were also known to uproot tall trees. They were also supposed to be cannibals.

The Algonquins were well acquainted with the Windigo, a "giant cannibalistic man" who wore no clothes and had a hideous black mouth with no lips. He made horrible hissing noises accompanied by reverberating howls. As we shall later see, these noises are frequently ascribed to Bigfoot.

The Indian legends of wild men or giant cannibals stretched across the border into Canada and Alaska, where the Eskimos called them "Tornit." And, of course, in the Pacific Northwest, they were called "Sasquatch."

If it's true that all legends have a basis in fact, then the universality of the belief in "wild men" must be carefully examined to separate the fiction from the reality. In modern times, reports of Bigfoot-like creatures have been coming in from all areas of New York State, from Long Island to Watertown. Let's take a look at some of them and see what they have in common.

continued on next page

Bigfoot reports from the Adirondacks have been around for a lot longer than most people realize, and it looks like they won't go away. Take this recent case, for example.

Two law enforcement officials who wish to remain anonymous say they were driving about 4:30 in the morning in early February, 1982, when they claim to have seen a large hairy creature "dash" across Route 22 near the Washington County Highway Department Garage and make its way into a heavily wooded area.

They described the apelike creature as from seven and a half to eight feet tall, all covered with a very dark brown fur that appeared dirty and mangy. "There's no way in hell that I could believe this was a man in a fur suit," the first officer exclaimed. He described it as having long arms that swung from side to side with movements similar to that of a person's, as it took "big lengthy strides." It moved "like a scared rabbit," at a pace a "relay runner would have trouble keeping up with.

Its shoulders were apparently not very broad—the creature was tall and lanky, and its eyes were highly reflective. The first officer said that he stopped the car, got out and chased it as it crossed the road and headed into the mountainous woods. He said that the creature "slouched" and that it had "poor posture for a human."

While the first officer was tracking the creature, the second officer said that he was perfectly content to stay in the car and watch from a distance.

Both officers say they are fearful of ridicule and of damaging their reputations and credibility if they come forward publicly with their tale, but both said they were willing to take a polygraph test to prove that they are telling the truth.

The second officer also says that four years earlier he encountered a similar creature sometime between May 15th and May 20th at 7:30 in the evening in a field near a farm in the East Bay area of Whitehall. When it saw him, "it turned right around and got the hell out of there."

Robert (left) and Paul Bartholomew holding plaster casts of 14 inch Bigfoot prints taken in Oregon.

Points South and West

It may sound very weird indeed, but a number of reports of apelike beings have been centered in Long Island since at least the turn of the century. In February, 1909, residents of the Long Island communities of Patchogue, Quogue, Eastport and Westhampton reported seeing on numerous occasions, a very strange creature that let out a "blood-curdling shriek."

Although no one ever got a really good look at the nocturnal mystery beast that frequented the woods, it was said to "glare out of the thickets with eyes of flame." As we shall see, fiery red glowing eyes that self-illuminate are a commonly reported Bigfoot characteristic.

Many of those who got a vague glimpse of the creature described it as a "baboon" or "monkey-like."

Thirteen years later in early November, 1922, reports circulated of the existence of a "ferocious baboon in the wilds of Long Island—" near Babylon. Residents became frightened, and, by November fifth, the situation had escalated to such a feverish pitch that search parties with armed hunters began scouring the woods. Reports of the creature varied, with descriptions ranging from a "baboon" to a "gorilla."

Nothing was ever found.

In 1931, there were more reports of a "wandering gorilla, or perhaps a chimpanzee" in the Huntington area. Not far away is a place called Mount Misery, where the famed journalist John Keel has recorded many sightings of a manlike monster. And in Amityville, later to be the sight of a famous haunting, an "eight-foot tall gorilla with glowing red eyes" was reported at about the same time.

Moving north, a number of sightings have been reported from rural Dutchess County in recent years. In Columbia County, the so-called "Kinderhook Creature" made newspaper headlines in 1980, and in 1981 was documents on television's *PM MAGAZINE.*

The western part of the state has had no shortage of strange reports in recent years either. In 1978, a Bigfoot, or something very similar, was reported in the Watertown area, and as recently as July of 1983, a Bigfoot was reportedly seen standing near a hardware store near Dexter, just outside of Lewis County.

But now we move to the heart of our story: the Adirondack region. We've already heard the yarn about the Bigfoot who turned out to be a man; we've heard the Indian traditions. Now let's see what we have in the way of modern sightings.

Eyewitness Reports

In June, 1975, on Route 3 near Saranac Lake, two men (who, like many Bigfoot witnesses, prefer to remain anonymous) were driving down the road when they saw what they described as a "Bigfoot" squatting beside the road watching them. They stopped the car and got out to approach it, whereupon it walked away on two legs.

Bigfoot is no stranger to the tiny

community of Whitehall, nestled between Lake Champlain (home of another well-known "mystery animal" called Champ) to the north and the Green Mountains of Vermont to the east, where reports of a large hairy creature have persisted for at least three decades.

It was Tuesday evening, August 24th, 1976, when two Whitehall men, Marty Paddock and Paul Gosselin, loaded their gear into a truck and headed out on what they thought would be a routine camping trip in the woods near Abair road. What reportedly happened next was far from routine.

The pair claimed to spot a huge figure on a small knoll by the roadside. They later returned with a disbelieving friend to get a closer look. This time, all three reportedly observed a large hairy creature. The frightened trio left in a hurry, with Paddock depositing a long trail of burned rubber on the road as they sped off to alert local authorities.

Whitehall Police, New York State Police and Washington County Sheriff's Deputies were soon on the scene, but were only able to spot the creature from a distance. Both police and civilians described the creature as apelike, between seven and eight feet tall, weighing from 300 to 400 pounds, with pink or red eyes which gave off an eerie glow. It reportedly made sounds like a loud pig squeal or a woman screaming, and was said to shy away from light.

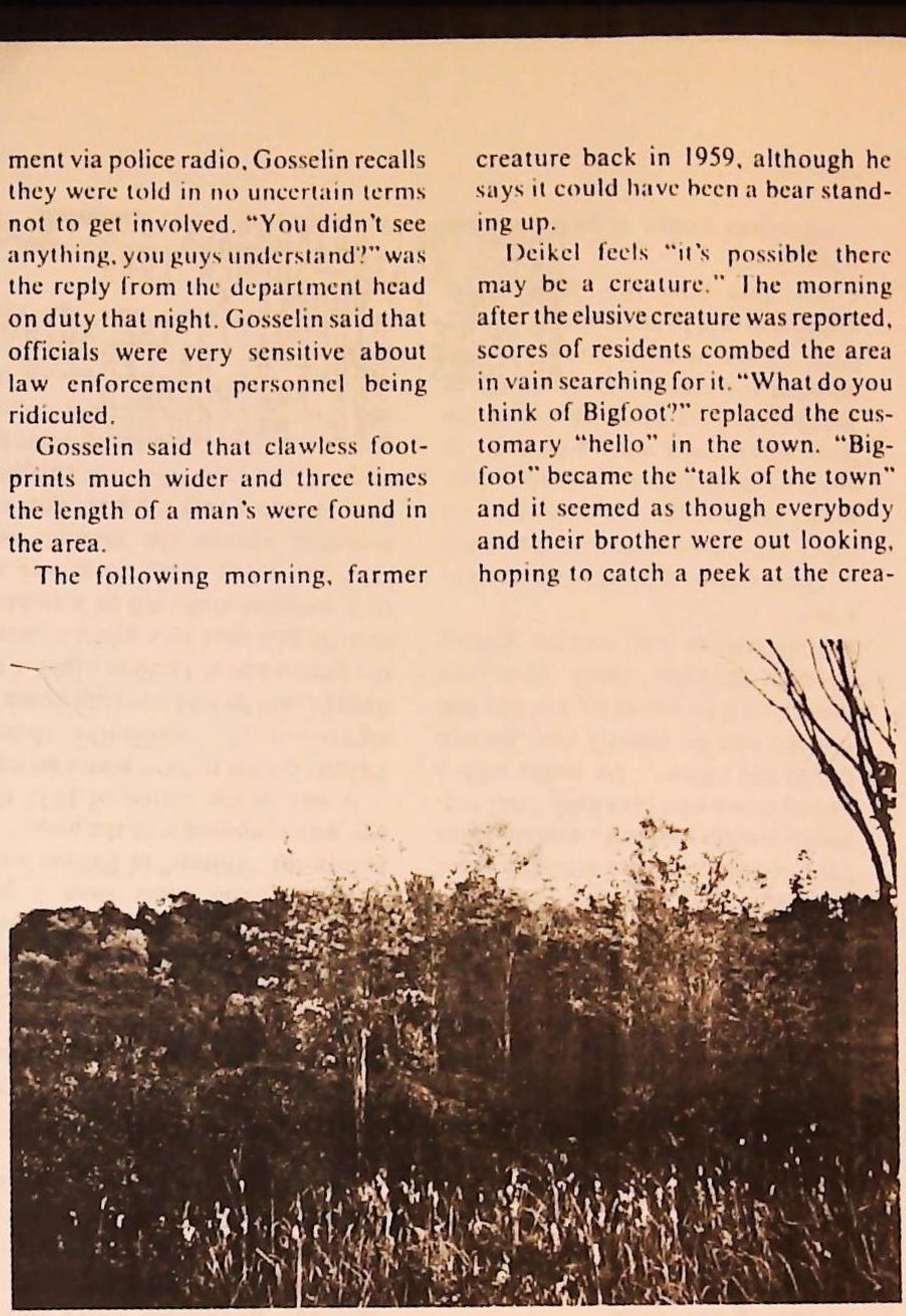
Whitehall Police Sgt. Wilfred Gosselin was able to see an "awful tall shadow" and later commented: "There is something out there, and it's no animal that belongs in the northern part of this state."

The sergeant, who is now retired, says he was riding with an unidentified deputy in a sheriff's patrol car, "flashing a spotlight on a large hedgerow near the junctions of Route 22A and Abair Road," when the creature was sighted. The deputy shouted, "Sarge, did you see that?" "Yeah, I saw it," Gosselin replied.

After reporting the incident to the Washington County Sheriff's Department via police radio, Gosselin recalls they were told in no uncertain terms not to get involved. "You didn't see anything, you guys understand?" was the reply from the department head on duty that night. Gosselin said that officials were very sensitive about law enforcement personnel being ridiculed.

Gosselin said that clawless footprints much wider and three times the length of a man's were found in the area.

The following morning, farmer



The swampy, wooded area at the intersection of Route 22A and Abair Road where Bigfoot has reportedly made three appearances.

Harry Deikel, who lives just a few hundred yards down the road from the hedgerow at the intersection of Route 22A, says that he found "huge human footprints" in his cornfield. He tracked the prints into a pasture where they "seemed to stop." Deikel said: "They can say I didn't see 'em, but I know what I saw and nobody's gonna change my mind."

Although he's never seen the creature himself, Deikel says a neighbor had an encounter with a large hairy creature back in 1959, although he says it could have been a bear standing up.

Deikel feels "it's possible there may be a creature." The morning after the elusive creature was reported, scores of residents combed the area in vain searching for it. "What do you think of Bigfoot?" replaced the customary "hello" in the town. "Bigfoot" became the "talk of the town" and it seemed as though everybody and their brother were out looking, hoping to catch a peek at the creature. Deikel thinks some of the townspeople might have gotten a big "carried away with the whole thing," but he asks: "Why would people say they saw it...why lie?"

The event turned into a family affair the next night, August 25th, when Brian Gosselin, the sergeant's son (and Paul's older brother), a patrolman on the Whitehall force, reportedly saw the creature, shortly after midnight. He says that it came to within 25 feet of his squad car when an off-duty state trooper flashed a light in the creature's eyes. Gosselin said the light caused it to cover its eyes and run away screaming.

The patrolman said that he was investigating a strange noise in a field

off Abair Road when he drove his car into the field near a hedgerow while the trooper positioned a "spotlight" on a "hedgerow where the thing was."

He then heard "something come crashing through the woods." The creature emerged, stopping about ten yards from his squad car. He then drew his revolver, cocking it, ready to fire. Next, he flashed the car's headlights on the creature, getting a good look.

Gosselin said that it had "big red eyes that bulged about half an inch off its face. As far as the mouth and nose, I didn't notice anything 'cause I was too scared—shook up...'cause I was staring at the eyeballs."

The patrolman stood mute with wonder and fright, watching the creature for some two minutes as it made its way back into the woods, screaming as it went.

According to Gosselin: "As far as the ears go, it has no ears, and it has no tail...and it doesn't walk on all fours, it walks on two like a man would." He described the hair as "dark, dark brown, almost black." At the back end of it, "the hair is more like worn-out, because you could see the seats of the buttocks sticking out through the hair" and it was "all covered with clay on the back end of it."

Continuing, Gosselin remarked: "His shoulders aren't straight like a man's are, they sloped...and the arms swung down past his knees." According to the officer, "He walks with a hunch...and he doesn't run...he can move fast if he wants to, but not fast enough to even catch you...you wouldn't have any trouble getting away."

There's also a report of an unidentified Whitehall schoolteacher who, as the story goes, was driving by an apple orchard about a mile and a half from Abair road, when a large hairy apelike creature came up out of the orchard and crossed the road right in front of the startled motorist. The sighting is said to have occurred only a few days after the sightings on Abair Road.

Whitehall police dispatcher Fred Palmer says that it was about that time that three or four hunters from nearby Fort Ann came into the police station claiming that they had just shot "Bigfoot." One police officer says he thinks they might have been jacking deer and had seen someone coming, deciding to jump on the Bigfoot bandwagon. Palmer said he also got the impression that the men might have partaken in a little too much "Bigfoot Juice."

Rumors abounded at the time of the 1976 sightings. One popular theory was that the creature was a circus gorilla which had escaped from a passing train. Another story that made the rounds was that it was a bear standing on its hind legs.

Palmer has his own theory. He says that shortly before the reports began, a local farmer was asked by a carnival "to care for a sick chimp." The farmer took the chimp and Palmer believes he later "let it go." Of all the theories he's heard, that one "seems to make the most sense," Palmer said.

But others aren't so sure. Take Cliff Sparks, owner of the Skeene Valley Country Club, a golf course on Norton Road near where the sightings have taken place. If seeing is believing, then Sparks is a believer—and what he reportedly saw was lumbering around more than a year before the "chimp" of Palmer's theory was supposedly in the area.

It was in the spring of 1975 that Palmer claims to have seen a seven to eight-foot-tall "sloth-like thing." Sparks said he was working down on the greens about 11:30 at night in his electric golf cart by a green adjacent to a wooded area. All of a sudden, "this great big hairy thing was silhouetted against the moonlit skyline." It had a very big girth and was very tall, he said. When it caught a glimpse of Sparks, he said: "I think it was a lot more startled than I was," although he noted, "The hair on the back of my neck stood right up, because these carts don't go very fast."

He described its head as "egg" or "cone-shaped." He continued: "It

Artists rendition of the Bigfoot sighted by Cliff Sparks on Norton road in 1975. Sketch by Rob DuBois.

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lumbered and walked with a very clumsy gait." Its shoulders were not very wide, he said, and "it didn't seem to have much of a neck." The creature reportedly ran about 35 feet away from the green and "crashed" through the woods in an awkward manner, making a lot of noise.

Sparks says a couple of years after the incident, he was standing outside the club at Four AM with a friend, Rolly Neddo of Whitehall, when they heard "one hell of a blood-curdling squeal." It was very "high-pitched" and lasted several seconds. Needless to say, the pair didn't investigate further.

It was also in 1975 when Sgt. Wilfred Gosselin said he was hunting one night with his brother Russell at

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the junctions of Route 22A and Abair Road when he heard an "eerie high-pitched yell" that lasted for about a minute. Wilfred said that some nearby cows ran frantically out of the field and "my brother Russell came out of there white as a sheet."

At that very same location, at the corners of Abair Road and Route 22A (the same spot where the sergeant and sheriff claimed to have seen an "awful tall shadow" in 1976), was the scene of an eerie encounter with something in 1978.

A man living in the area at the time says that he was awakened at about one in the morning by whining yelps from his Doberman Pinscher, which, to his amazement, was hiding under the bed. The man, who wishes to remain anonymous, said: "I mean, he was really terrified. He was a very ferocious and fearless dog. He would attack a bull and not back off." But the normally fearless dog was "terrified, trying to crawl under the bed and get away."

The man sat on his bed, peering out the window, his .22 caliber rifle cocked, with his finger on the trigger.

Then came the most frightening part, he recalls. A loud piercing scream shattered the early morning calm of that hot, muggy night in early August, sending shivers up and down his spine. He described it as "an anguished cry, like somebody going through ultimate pain. This was a very lonely, painful shrieking and it echoed terrible." He was very familiar with animals in the area, and the man said that no animal ever sounded like that.

A woman who lives in the general vicinity off Sciota Road claims to have heard an eerie shrieking cry on several occasions at night, echoing through the nearby village.

An amateur archeologist from Hudson Falls by the name of William Brann probably knows more about the Whitehall Bigfoot than anyone else (excluding Bigfoot himself). Brann has spoken with a number of people who claim to have seen and heard strange things over the years. Brann recalls three sightings that took place in the Rutland, Vermont area in the early 1960's. The next report involves the discovery of a large human-like footprint found in the South Bay area in March of 1967. Brann said that he was "checking into reports of a loud shrieking sound" in the area at the time that he came upon the print.

Does he believe? "Well," Brann says, "I think it's very possible there's something to it because there's so much consistency to the reports. The descriptions are very similar."

The most recent Bigfoot report in the Whitehall area was made a couple of years ago. A police official informed us that two members of "an area law enforcement agency" were riding in a car and "supposedly saw Bigfoot" in a wooded area adjacent to the Washington County Highway Garage on Route 22 north near the South Bay Bridge.

According to the official, the officers spotted the creature while turning their patrol car. One of the officers

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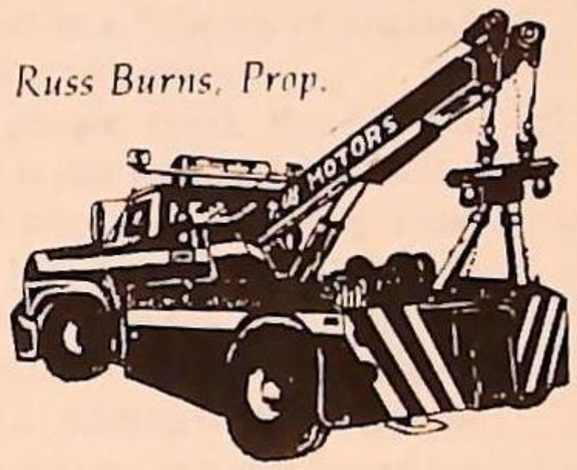

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reportedly got out of the car and gave chase across a field and into the woods. The second officer reportedly said that he was content to stay in the car and watch.

In late November, 1978, the Whitehall Bigfoot's northern Vermont cousin, "Goonyak", was reported in the Craftesbury-Morrisville area. As the story goes, a farmer in the area supposedly shot the creature after it broke into his barn. It reportedly dragged his 1,000 pound Holstein bull 500 yards into an open field. The creature took "ten shots in the chest with a 30.06 rifle until he killed it."

It was said that the creature was then taken under armed guard to a secret location at the University of Vermont and autopsied. A local newspaper reporter who checked on such an autopsy with Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Eleanor McQuillen and professors of Animal Pathology, Zoology and Botany said that inquiries resulted in a "chorus of amused but negative responses."

Many people think the Bigfoot bull story is just that...a lot of bull.

It's the consensus of many local residents that the "Goonyak" story was a hoax, as there was only one alleged encounter which was highly sensational. Adding to this suspicion is the fact that no one ever found the body of the slain Bigfoot—or the bull, for that matter. Also, to our knowledge, no other reports of Bigfoot have ever been reported in the Craftsbury-Morrisville area.

What is It?

Now that we've tracked the history of Bigfoot from ancient Indian legends and folktales through modern sightings, let's see what we can come up with in the way of theories. Just what is Bigfoot? The ideas are many and varied, and the following is a list in order of probability as to what type of creature may be roaming the Adirondack forests:

1. A large, hairy, hominoid, or prehistoric "human", of a species so far unknown to science.

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2. A paranormal phenomenon akin to poltergeists and hauntings.

3. Mis-identifications of known animals, i.e. bears.

4. Escaped gorillas or chimpanzees from zoos or circuses.

5. Pranksters dressed up in costumes, etc.

Now let's examine these possibilities one by one. Obviously, pranksters haven't been dressing up in animal skins or rented ape costumes since the days of the Indians just to scare people. This theory couldn't possibly account for Bigfoot's supposed height, strength and the depth of his footprints. Even the "wild man" of the Adirondacks didn't have people convinced for very long that he was anything but an ordinary man.

The rationalization that all such creatures are zoo escapees boggles the mind. If that were the case, every zoo in the country (or indeed the world) would be empty of gorillas and chimps. It's a very pat "logical" explanation that doesn't hold up under close scrutiny.

There can be no doubt that bear have occasionally been mistaken for Bigfoot. Nonetheless, bear do not walk on their hind legs, although they may rear up when alarmed or looking for food. They *never* run on two legs; they're quite incapable of standing erect for any period of time. Since Bigfoot is always reported as being bipedal, we can rule out bear or other animals in nearly every case.

Now we're left with the two most tantalizing theories: the idea that Bigfoot is some sort of paranormal or supernormal entity, and the theory that it's a survival of a lost race of prehistoric Man. Both theories have much to recommend them.

Dr. Gary Levine, a professor of social sciences at Columbia-Greene Community College in Hudson, New York, subscribes to the paranormal theory. He has personally investigated many UFO and Bigfoot cases, the latter of which have included sev-

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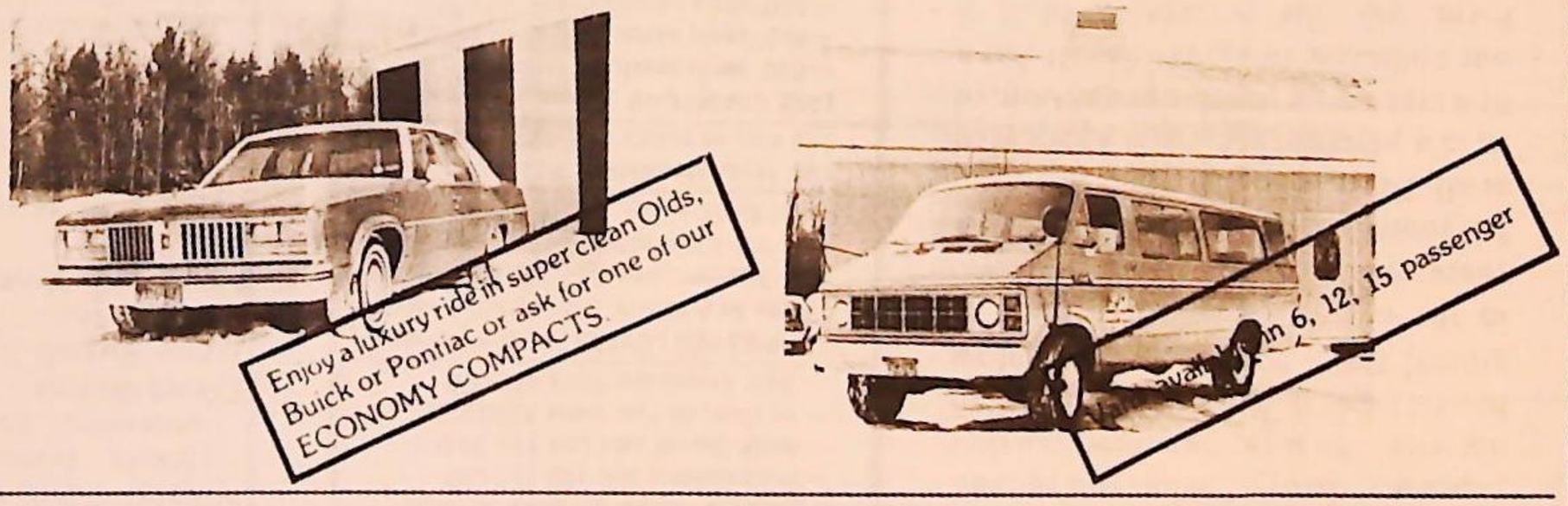

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eral "hunts" for the creature in wooded areas of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Columbia and Green Counties in New York State.

"It seems to be a paranormal phenomenon which is related to psychic powers," Levine explains. "Some people who are psychic can draw the creature to them. It has a physical presence, but the experts tend to classify it in a different way."

Levine has no patience with the "apeman" theory. "What you're dealing with," he says, "is something that has no basis in evolution. It's not an animal that's been somehow hiding in the mounains for thousands of years and then suddenly comes down. It's something that shouldn't be here at all. But it *is* here, and it's drawn to us in a psychic fashion. It appears to be a creation, a psychic projection, of our collective imaginations. It *has* a form, but our perception of it is exactly what *we* think it should look like."

Although the paranormal theory may sound outrageous to many people, it would explain certain mysterious aspects of some Bigfoot cases, such as Mr. Deikel's Bigfoot tracks that suddenly ended in the middle of a field. Paranormalists argue that these creatures can appear or dematerialize at will.

The stuff of science fiction? Perhaps. But in a rash of sightings of Bigfoot in Pennsylvania in 1973, scores of witnesses claimed to have seen a Bigfoot's head floating disembodied in the air, or just the lower part of its body running across fields. They've also been seen, supposedly, in conjunction with UFO's and some of them seem to have weird effects on electrical machinery; they've been reported as causing cars to stall, cameras and tape recorders to malfunction, and televisions to go haywire.

A lot of people have trouble accepting the paranormal theory, which is why the "sub-human" or "apeman" theory is still the most popular. Dr. Warren Cook, a history professor at Castleton State College in Vermont, has a keen interest in Bigfoot. He leans more towards the theory of the

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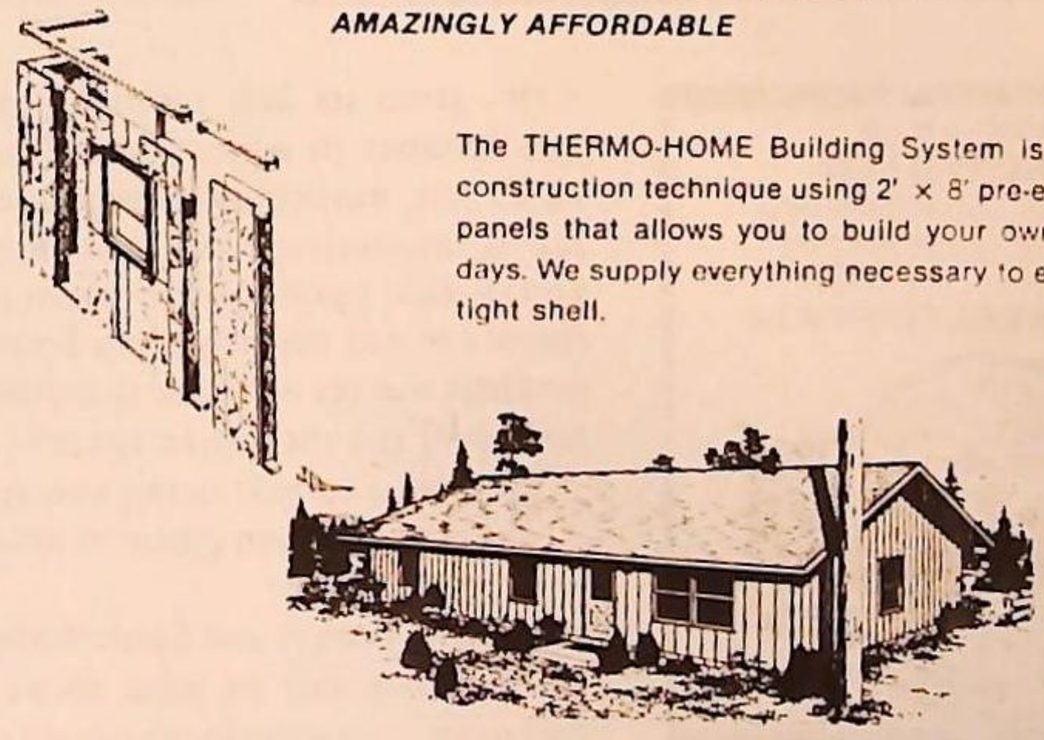

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creature being a physical being, perhaps a prehistoric hominoid.

He recently saw the documentary film, *In the Shadow of Bigfoot*, made by C. Thomas Biscardi and Ivan Marx of California, and, according to an article in *Weekly World News*, was highly impressed. Biscardi and company had filmed some of the documentary in Kinderhook when they heard of the "Kinderhook Creature", but it was footage filmed by Marx and Biscardi in California that really amazed him.

The 28 seconds of footage were supposedly shot near Snow Mountain in Northern California, and they depict a Bigfoot over eight feet tall and about 500 pounds in weight splashing water over its body, probably to rid itself of mosquitoes, flies and bugs. The footage is so clear that the creature can be seen to be an adult male, and it was photographed in broad daylight.

The *News* quoted Cook as saying: "The superb clarity, detail and sheer beauty of the successive shots of the creature are far superior in scientific import to any other Bigfoot pictures I have seen. They possess a great feeling of naturalness and nonhumanness, but anthropoid authenticity. The manner in which it shakes the water from its pelt I don't believe could be duplicated by a human."

Other Bigfoot researchers, such as Dr. Grover Krantz of Washington, agree that the Bigfoot is in fact more anthropoid than human. But even those who subscribe to the "apeman" theory can't agree as to whether it should be classified as a highly evolved ape or a primitive human. At a recent conference of the International Society of Cryptozoology in New York, Krantz advocated killing a Bigfoot so that scientists could study a dead specimen, an idea which horrifies those believers who feel that Bigfoot should be left alone.

Conclusion

After an examination of the known evidence on Bigfoot, it has been proven to our satisfaction that Bigfoot could exist and that the probability is that it does. Exactly what it is can still be debated. If it is, in fact, an antedeluvian hominoid, evidence suggests that it is shy, retiring, afraid of

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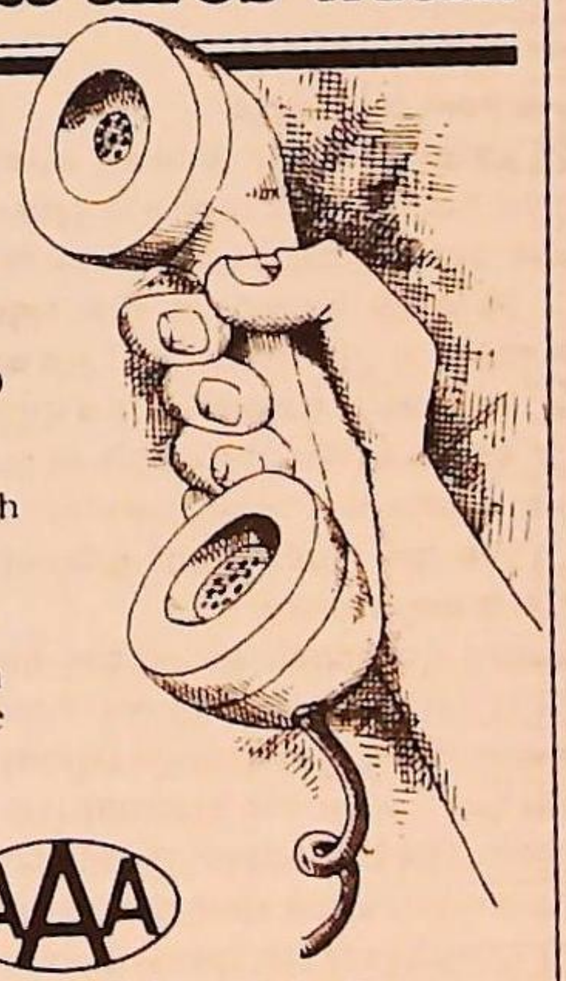

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contact with humans, and that its diet probably consists of rabbits, deer, and possibly berries. Fecal wastes attributed to Bigfoot have been found several times.

If Bigfoot is a part of the zoological rather than the paranormal world, then researchers and those concerned with conservation should take steps to insure its protection. If such creatures exist, there are precious few of them left, and the scientific refusal to accept the existence of an animal without dissecting its corpse on a table is unfortunate.

If, on the other hand, Bigfoot is what researcher Loren Coleman calls a "creature of the outer edge of reality," then we're dealing with a different kettle of fish altogether. We may not have an answer to this riddle soon, but as Shakespeare once said, "there are stranger things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." □

About the authors:

Bruce G. Hallenbeck is a freelance writer and film critic for Albany's METROLAND Magazine and WQBK Radio Station. He has been researching the Bigfoot phenomenon since 1980, when his own family had several encounters with the so-called "Kinderhook Creature" in Columbia County. Mr. Hallenbeck is a member of the International Society of Cryptozoology, and also has a weekly cable television show, has published two volumes of poetry and has published articles on a wide variety of subjects, ranging from American history to home video.

Bob Bartholomew is a former radio news reporter in the Glens Falls/Albany area. He is currently working on his doctorate in sociology at SUNY in Albany.

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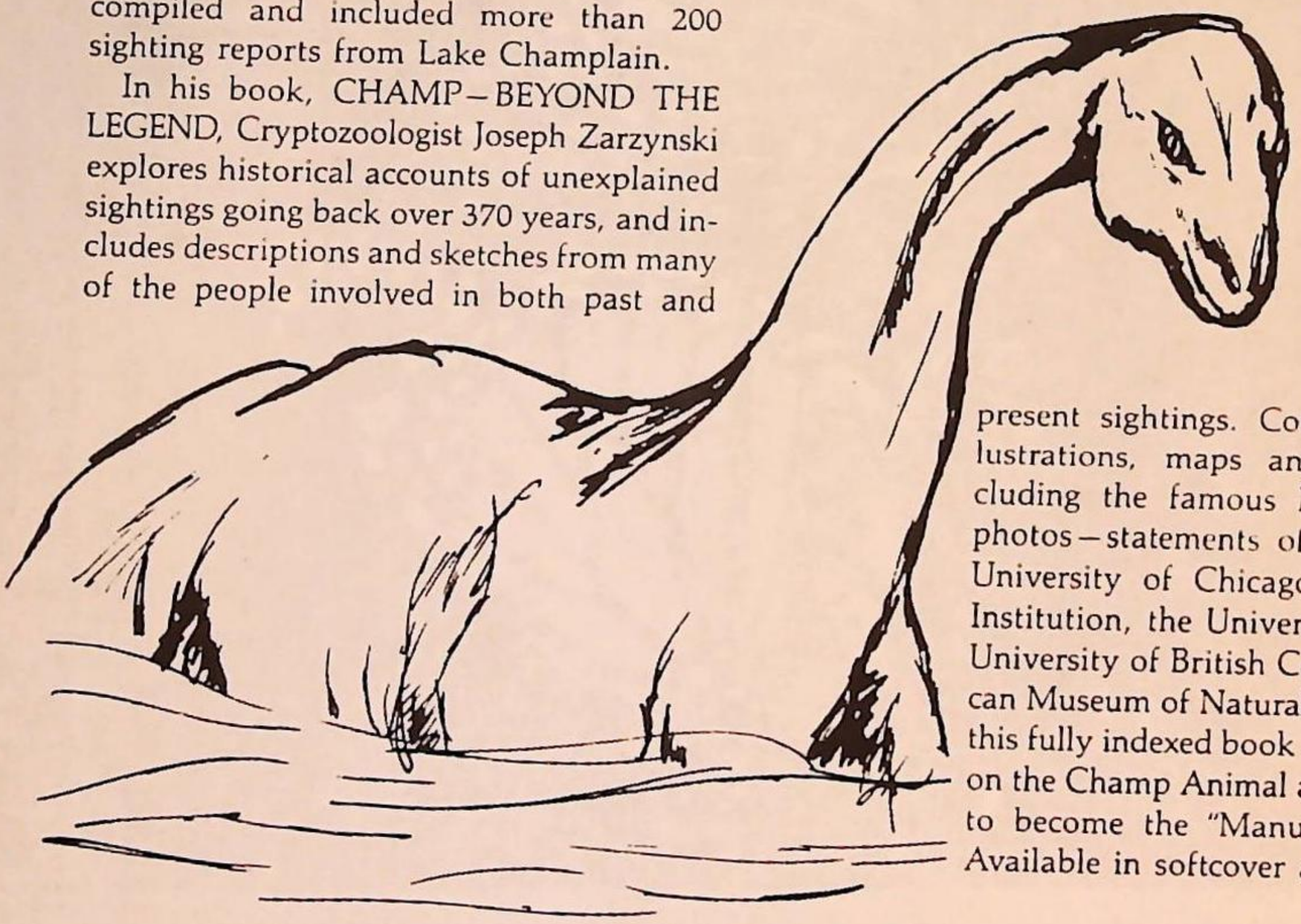

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